DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 114 914 EA 007 628

AUTHOR Sharpes, Donald K.
TITLE A Preliminary Analysis of the Role of Federal Education Administrators in the U.S. Office of Education.
PUB DATE May 75
NOTE 22p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Agencies; *Administrative Personnel; *Administrator Attitudes; Administrator Education; Educational Administration; *Federal Government; Job Satisfaction; *Occupational Surveys; *Personnel Data; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS Office of Education

ABSTRACT

A survey of 136 doctorate-holding administrators employed in the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the United States Office of Education sought to measure educational administrators' perceptions of their responsibilities, training and background, future orientation, and job satisfaction. Two types of analyses were used: an analysis of computerized personnel data, and an analysis of administrators' responses to an 18-item questionnaire. Questionnaire items fell into four general categories, including perceptions about job preferences, perceptions about graduate preparation and choice of academic field, perceptions about present administrative responsibilities, and perceptions about teaching, research, and choice of colleagues. A number of data tables summarize both the computerized personnel information and administrators' responses to the various questionnaire items. (Author/JG)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED114914

A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF FEDERAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS IN THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Donald K. Sharpes
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Reston, Va.

May, 1975

EA 007 628

Federal educators have been largely hidden as teachers and administrators in federal penal institutions, Department of Defense overseas schools, and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools.

Only within the last decade with the expansion of congressional legislation in education, the subsequent growth of the U.S. Office of Education, and the birth of The National Institute of Education has the role played by federal education administrators even been a subject considered for research.

There has been little systematic investigation into the role or function of those executives who administer millions of dollars of federal educational aid to state agencies, colleges and universities, schools, and research centers and institutes.

The Brookings Institution has published several reports on top level federal personnel and positions. These have included: "The Assistant Secretaries: Problems and Processes of Appointment," by Dean Mann; "The Higher Civil Service: An Evaluation of Federal Personnel Practices," by David T. Stanley; "The Job of the Federal Executive," by Marver H. Bernstein; "Men Who Govern: A Biographical Profile of Federal Political Executives," by David T. Stanley, et al; and "The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It," by Charles L. Class.

But generally, what has been published thus far speaks largely to issues relating to the process or historical development of programs, legislation or administration of federal programs. Notable among these have been Bailey and Mosher's classic study of ESEA (1968), Berke and Kirst (1973), Hughes and Hughes (1973), and Kirst (1970). Kirst's study, The Politics of Education at the Local, State, and Federal Levels, in the

section of the politics of federal education, draws largely from Bailey and Mosher.

Some related research was conducted ten years ago. It was published in 1966 as "Men Near the Top, Filling Key Posts in the Federal Service," by the Committee for Economic Development. The sample size was 817 individuals of career civil servants who served in 1963 in positions classified as GS-16, -17, and -18 and in positions provided for under Public Law 313 which allowed for the recruitment of individuals with specific technical and specialized skills.

Other similar studies have investigated educators in other institutional settings. The Faculty Morale Scale for Institutional Improvement of the American Association of University Professors was developed by Psychometrics Associates in 1963. Similar scales measure attitudes toward a company, its policies, its management, and relations with the community. Other scales attempt to measure attitudes toward occupations.

Sells (in Cattell 1966) described the process of multivariate technology in industrial military personnel psychology. Among the personnel management problems identified were staffing, maintaining productivity, and providing career opportunities. The military bureaucracy, perhaps the oldest in the world, excels in all three categories.

Sells reported that of ten trait structures relating to selection, most studies of military personnel found a number of personality trait ratings by peers and later officer performance of those candidates were significantly related to a criterion based on officer effectiveness reports.

On one issue organizational experts agree--the work experience is not necessarily separated into neat, work domains that coincide with human aptitudes, personality traits, or interests.

It is easier to describe the process of administering federal educational programs than it is to describe the role played by federal educational administrators. The U.S. Office of Education constantly reorganizes new work relationships, as anyone knows who has attempted to maintain close contact with any group, program or individual. Analyses of organizational charts, communication networks, power structure and status hierarchies are consequently only of temporary value.

What conceivably could be of more permanent use is a clearer understanding of how such individuals view themselves in that work milieu.

This report will describe the results of an investigation into personnel records and a survey which sought the perceptions federal educational administrators who hold the doctorate and who work for the headquarters office in Washington have of their responsibilities, training and background, and future orientation and possible job satisfaction.

It is a preliminary investigation that is descriptive of the federal administrative role in USOE. There was no attempt to correlate data or to relate data to a criterion, such as work productivity, administrative effectiveness, or a personality dimension.

Two methods of analyses were used: 1) an analysis of personnel data available through computer print-out, and 2) an analysis of the results of a questionaire seeking perceptions of job satisfaction, professional preparation, and job preference.

There are about 2800 employees in the Washington office of the U.S. Office of Education. By most standards in Washington, it is a small federal agency. However, the greater number of those who manage programs and hold key administrative positions have a doctorate degree, and it is these individuals this study attempted to reach. The possession of an advanced degree, especially a doctorate, (certain fields such as architecture excepted) is generally recognized as the first qualification for entry into a profession. Limiting the sample to administrators with doctorates was also a way of reducing the sample size to manageable proportions.

The limitations are that there is no attempt to generalize to all federal educational personnel. Other federal agencies employ doctorate-holding personnel and operate federal educational programs. The departments of Agriculture and Labor, Office of Economic Opportunity, National Institute of Education and Action are some examples.

Moreover, within the Office of Education there are 10 regional offices, whose professional employees share in the responsibility of managing programs authorized by congressional legislation. None of these agency and regional personnel are the subject of this study; only the national program managers.

The sample was composed of 136 doctorate-holding employees in USOE. At the time of this study there were about 2800 employees in USOE headquarters in Washington, D.C. There is no easy way of determining actually how many personnel with doctorates work in USOE. But most senior officials have the doctorate. The doctorate qualifies an individual under Civil Service regulations for the grade of GS-11. Most doctorate-holding officials hold higher GS grades.

I ANALYSIS OF PERSONNEL DATA

The researcher obtained a list in 1973 of 136 U.S. Office of Education employees who held the doctorate. The first three (not alphabetized) from the personnel print-out will serve as examples.

Example 1. 14 years experience in elementary school administration, 25 years experience in public school and college teaching and administration, doctorate in education.

Example 2. 10 years experience as a federal specialist in music, 5 years as head of a college music department, 9 years in USOE, doctorate in music education.

Example 3. 4 years as director of information for a large federal agency, 14 years as college dean of student services and administration, doctorate in guidance.

A closer examination of the selected personnel data reveal that previous non-federal experience has not only been spent in education, but that nearly 30 percent have had college or university administration experience ranging from Director, Supervisor and Coordinator, through Department Chariperson and Dean to President. (see Table I). A significant number have had administrative experience in state education agencies, and nearly all have had teaching experience.

A sample listing of some of the doctorate specialities appears in Table II. Although the majority are in education or education related fields, there are sufficient numbers in languages and physical sciences. Apart from the degree in linguistics and communications, the language fields of those who hold the doctorate include: French, English, Russian and Romance Languages. The physical sciences doctorate include: Genetics, Chemistry, and Physics.

TABLE I

EXAMPLES OF SELECTED NON-FEDERAL EXPERIENCES OF

USOE HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL WITH DOCTORATES

College President.....2

College Vice-President.....2

Assistants to Presidents.....2

Dean (e.g., student services, women, students, etc.).....5

Dean of College.....5

Dept.Chairman.....8

College Supervisor or Coordinator..8

College Director (e.g. Bureau of Educational Research & Services, Testing Bureau, Guidance, etc.).9

State Educ. Agency Director.....8

State Educ. Agency Specialist.....5

TABLE II

SAMPLES OF DOCTORATE SPECIALTIES

OF SELECTED U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERSONNEL

(N=1[illegible]0)

Educational Administration....35
Education (unspecified).....21
History (including American, Latin American, etc.)..... 9
Guidance and Counseling..... 8
Law..... 7
Higher Education..... 6
Psychology..... 4
Educational Psychology..... 4

3 each.....adult education, secondary education, library science, international relations

2 each.....music education, science education, curriculum, special education, vocational education

1 each.....comparative education, clinical psychology, social psychology, Greek, linguistics, French, English, Russian, Romance Languages, communications, sociology, political science, philosophy, ecology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, junior college, administration, public administration, genetics

Nearly half of the sample (41 percent) however, had doctorates in educational administration and in an unspecified education doctorate.

The personnel print-out does not specify the institution awarding the degree. A further investigation could determine if federal education specialists come from a few selected institutions, such as Ivy League schools, or represent a cross-section of the nation's higher education doctorate degree-awarding institutions.

The researcher has personal knowledge of a number of personnel excluded from the data base, a fact which raises questions about the representativeness of the sample.

Analyses of the available data did indicate the diversity of educational background and training of senior level USOE officials and the breadth and depth of their experiences.

II ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Identifying education levels from personnel data from any government agency is nearly impossible. In 1973 when the personnel print-out of doctorate personnel was obtained, USOE had its own personnel data bank. Since then, responsibility for personnel records has been transferred ~~to the~~ For the maintenance to the parent agency HEW, making extraction of comparable data even more difficult.

During the interval between the acquisition of the personnel data and administration of the survey, a number of potential subjects resigned, retired or transferred to other agencies (mostly NIE).

The questionnaire was mailed to all those appearing on the personnel print-out. After a follow-up request, a 62 percent of those surveyed responded.

There were 18 questions sampling perceptions on a Likert-type scale of agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, disagree, no opinion. A blank response was also coded, but in the analysis grouped with no opinion.

Items tapping various research areas were not grouped categorically together but were distributed randomly throughout the questionnaire. Basically, the categories sampled were 1) perceptions about job preferences, 2) perceptions about graduate preparation and academic choice of subject field, 3) administrative responsibilities, and lastly 4) perceptions about teaching, research and choice of colleagues.

1. Analysis of Perceptions About Job Preferences

Five of the 18 questions were designed to measure respondent satisfaction with present job responsibilities and current desire to pursue (or return to) careers in colleges or universities. Table III reveals the percentages of agreement on those items.

The results were both predictable and apparently contradictory. Predictably, most, 74%, at some point since entering USOE had thought about returning to university life. Perhaps predictably also, many, from 11% to 20%, declined to respond at all to questions involving future job preference.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGES OF AGREEMENT ON JOB PREFERENCE

FOR USOE HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL HOLDING THE DOCTORATE

(N=90)

	total percentage of agreement *	percentage of "agree"	percentage of "tend to agree"	percentage of omission (blank or "no opinion"
1. Since entering USOE have you ever seriously considered leaving to return to university teaching, research or administration?	74%	52%	21%	11%
2. Would you prefer teaching full or part-time to your present administrative responsibilities?	29%+	20%	9%	15%
3. Would you prefer university administration to federal educational administration?	39%+	16%	23%	17%
4. Do you plan to remain in USOE indefinitely?	58%	38%	19%	20%
5. If you had another job opportunity in your academic field of comparable status and income would you accept it?	58%	22%	36%	18%
6. Are you satisfied you have reached a terminal point in your career?	42%	21%	21%	6%

* "total percentage of agreement" is an aggregate of the responses to "agree" and "tend to agree."

One unpredictable and somewhat contradictory result is that a majority, 58%, indicated that if they had another job offer of comparable status and income they would accept it, while the same percentage (although of differing intensities of agreement) indicated that they planned to remain in USOE indefinitely.

Is this apparent inconsistency characteristic of 1) career professionals who are always questioning whether or not they have achieved their ultimate potential; 2) personality traits of people who, compulsively, want simultaneously to hold onto the best of what they have while seeking something better; 3) members of a group structure who feel a certain bond within the organization and a loyalty for its other members while also wanting to break away to satisfy a deeper commitment?

The answers are obviously beyond this study's scope, if known, but could give new scope to organizational researchers, and to the measurement of descriptive data to a personality criterion.

In a related question about whether or not they have reached a terminus in their careers, nearly half (42 percent) indicated that they had. It is questionable whether or not this is related to age, to career aspiration, or the inability or futility of seeking a career or a job elsewhere. This statistic too appears to be inconsistent with the figure indicating a tendency to accept a job opportunity of comparable status and income.

The key word may well be "income". Federal salaries, for so many years, held low in comparison with higher education posts and comparable positions in business, have now risen almost embarrassingly.

Federal educators may not be able to leave civil service appointments for other positions in education because of salary inequities.

2. Analysis of Perceptions About Preparation, Academic Field and Administrative Responsibilities

This section expresses in percentages of agreement items that relate to graduate training, academic specialty and present administrative responsibilities (See Table IV). Respondents, in the main, perceive themselves as:

* qualified to discharge their responsibilities
* satisfied with their doctorate specialty
* satisfied with their present assignment
* believing that their doctoral preparation is useful in carrying out their present professional administrative activities.

They are less in agreement about how their doctoral preparation led to their present job choice, and how they can stay active in their doctoral specialty while maintaining their present position . (See items 3 and 7 in Table IV) Specifically, only 37 percent actively sought their position as a career choice (only 13 percent in the "agree" category), and only 47 percent thought their position allowed them the opportunity to stay current in their academic specialty.

Perhaps the issue of how best to relate their doctoral preparation to their work and administrative responsibilities gave many respondents pause as they considered whether or not their jobs in USOE allowed them to participate in academic life in the manner they felt most qualified. 51 percent indicated that working in USOE prohibited them from such academic participation in the areas of their training and qualifications.

TABLE IV

SAMPLE PERCEPTIONS OF GRADUATE TRAINING, ACADEMIC SPECIALTY, AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR USOE HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL HOLDING THE DOCTORATE

(N=90)

	total %	% of "agree	% of "tend to agree"	no opinion and blank
1. Do you administer what you feel qualified to administer?	74%	57%	17%	8%
2. Do your supervisors hold you accountable as a specialist in your academic specialty?	50%	28%	21%	10%
3. Was the position you now hold something you actively sought as a career choice?	37%	13%	23%	8%
4. Are you satisfied with your academic specialty which led to your doctorate?	90%	79%	11%	6%
5. Are you satisfied with your present assignment?	66%	37%	29%	8%
6. Does your doctorate relate in any way to your performance of your present activities or responsibilities?	70%	41%	29%	9%
7. Does your position allow you to stay current in your academic specialty?	47%	23%	24%	10%
8. Do you feel that working in USOE prohibits you from participating in academic life the way in which you consider yourself best trained and qualified?	51%	32%	18%	11%

In any organization or bureaucracy, among the most critical personnel and management problems relate to the manner in which people can be best deployed so as to maximize their talents and competencies. It may be demoralizing and inefficient to find that although people in general believe they are performing satisfactory work experiences and making a contribution to the organization's cause, their full potential--in this instance their doctoral training-- is not being used to best advantage. This is especially significant when such individuals reply (90 percent agreement in Table IV) that they are satisfied with their academic choice.

3. Analysis of Teaching, Research and Choice of Colleagues

The last set of data are figures, again representing percentages of agreement, on teaching, research and "intellectual colleagues." (See Table V). The question is, what are those characteristics which distinguish an academic representative or university faculty member from an administrator. Generally, those characteristics are the traditional higher education performance indices--teaching, research, and service. Excluding the service function (perhaps the most difficult to measure) the researcher included teaching and research questions in the survey since it would appear that these traits would set doctoral staff apart as individuals performing in the academic tradition, in addition to performing their job responsibilities.

Somewhat surprisingly, 52 percent indicated that they still continue to conduct research. The research capability, for which ultimately an individual receives a doctorate, *is* still alive and well in USOE. The not-so-surprising statistic is that only 14 percent believe that the conduct of research and publication of findings contribute to their

TABLE V

PERCENTAGES OF AGREEMENT ON TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND INTELLECTUAL COLLEGUES FOR USOE HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL HOLDING THE DOCTORATE

(N=90)

	% of agreement	% of "agree"	% of "tend to "agree"	no opinion or blank
1. Do you teach part-time or as a part of your responsibilities?	28%	20%	8%	13%
2. Does research and publication in your specialty contribute to promotion and pay increases?	14%	9%	5%	13%
3. Do you still periodically do research on your own or with others?	53%	29%	24%	10%
4. Are you closest intellectual colleagues now in government service?	36%	25%	11%	9%

professional promotion or to pay increases.

If research, however interpreted or conducted, could be carried out within the work sphere, it is clear that teaching probably could not. Nevertheless, 28 percent do teach part-time or as a part of their job responsibilities. The researcher is aware that many USOE personnel teach in the colleges and university programs in Metropolitan Washington, D.C. in their specialty areas.

The question concerning work location of respondents' colleagues was asked in an attempt to validate the inferences that, if intellectual stimulation was within one's work sphere, it was likely that work productivity and efficiency would thereby be improved. As it turns out, only 36 percent were even in government service.

It's probable that a good percentage have colleagues in higher education or private industry. It is conjectural whether or not this contributes to a fertile and intellectually stimulating work environment in USOE.

SUMMARY

What can we learn from a preliminary study of USOE senior administrative personnel with doctorates? Some data are unequivocal, but not all were predicted.

1. 30 percent of 139 doctorate-holding individuals have had experience as college or university administrators (two were presidents).
2. Although 41 percent of 139 held doctorates in education or educational administration, 9 percent were in languages, 10 percent in law, and 7 percent in the physical sciences.
3. That 52 percent do not believe they have yet reached a terminal point in their careers.
4. 41 percent would not prefer university to federal administration.
5. 58 percent plan to remain indefinitely in USOE.
6. 66 percent are satisfied with their assignments.
7. 70 percent believe their doctorates relate to their responsibilities.
8. 90 percent are satisfied with their academic choice which led to their doctorate.
9. 53 percent still periodically conduct research, although this does not contribute to promotion or pay increases.

Morale is an illusive and ethereal characteristic that varies with the disposition of the worker, the conditions of the work, and the relationships within the work group, especially between supervisor-subordinate. Since work characteristics are often changing in the USOE--new legislation is passed by Congress (in the recent past, the Indian Education Act, Emergency School Act, and legislation creating The National Institute of Education), new task forces developed, new organizational changes made--morale shifts correspondingly.

Analyzing executives in an organizational structure as complicated as the federal government poses control difficulties. An inherent danger also exists in generalizations beyond the sample data to unknown populations. Knowing that 58 percent, for example, plan to remain indefinitely in USOE may or may not bode well for supervisors who must deal with the reality that 42 percent don't wish to remain.

Further scholarly investigations into the role of senior federal education officials can contribute to our understanding of the administration of federal programs. Such investigations can also be useful in furthering the work of graduate training programs for prospective federal administrators.

Professional education has a great deal to learn from those who manage roughly 10 percent of the funds that are channeled into school systems. Analyzing and describing the organizational role and function of these executives is only a beginning step into a neglected research area.

REFERENCES

"American Federalism: Into the Third Century," Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Washing.,D. C, May, 1974, 39 pp.

Atkin, J. Myron, "Governmental Roles," in New Perspectives on Teachers Education, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1973, pp. 73-83.

Bailey, Stephen and Edith Mosher, ESEA: The Office of Education Administers a Fair, Syrocuse University Press, Ithaca, N. Y., 1968.

Bereiter, Carl, "Multivariate Analyses of the Behavior and Structure of Groups and Organizations," in Handbook of Multivariate Experimental Psychology, edited by Raymond B. Cattell, Rand McNally, Chicago, pp. 753 ff.

Berke, Joel, and Michael W. Kirst, Federal Aid to Education: Who Benefits? Who Governs?, Lexington Books, N. Y., 1973.

Best, John, Research in Education, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1959, pp. 157 ff.

Ferguson, George, Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education, McGraw Hill, N. Y. , pp. 226 ff.

Gagne, Robert, "Qualifications of Professionals in Educational R & D," Educational Researcher, Vol 4, # 2, Feb, 1975, pp. 7-11.

Green, Edith, "The Federal Role in Education," in Education and the Public Good, (Burton lecture), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1963.

Hughes, John and Anne Hughes, Equal Education:A New National Strategy, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind., 1973.

Kendall, Maurice G., Rank Correlation Methods, Charles Griffin and Co., Ltd., London, 1948, p.81 ff.

Sells, Saul B., "Multivariate Technology in Industrial and Military Personnel Psychology," in Cattell, op cit, pp. 841 ff. (to 855).

Sharpes, Donald K. "Administering Federal Educational Policy," in Strategies for Differentiated Staffing edited by Fenwick W. English and Donald K. Sharpes, McCutchan Publishing Co., Berkeley, Calf., 1972, pp. 363-381.

Shaw, Marvin E. and Jack M. Wright, Scales for the Measurement of Attitudes, McGraw Hill, N. Y., 1967.

Siegel, Sidney, Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Science, McGraw Hill, N. Y., 1956, pp. 229 ff.

Wert, James E., Charles O. Neidt, J. Stanley Ahmann, Statistical Methods in Educational Psychological Research, Appleton-Century Crofts , N. Y., 1954, pp 146 ff.

Winer, P. J. Statistical Principles in Experimental Design, McGraw-Hill, N. Y. 1962, pp. 136 ff.